

**USACHPPM**  
**HEALTH INFORMATION OPERATIONS (HIO) UPDATE**

16 November 2002

The HIO Update provides information regarding global medical and veterinary issues of interest to the United States (US) Army. The update does not attempt to analyze the information regarding potential strategic or tactical impact to the US Army and as such, should not be regarded as a medical intelligence product. Medical intelligence products are available at <http://mic.afmic.detrick.army.mil/>. The information in the HIO Update should provide an increased awareness of current and emerging health-related issues.

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## HOT ISSUES

### Adverse Events Associated With 17D-Derived Yellow Fever Vaccination -- United States, 2001-2002

8 November – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported between May 2001- October 2002, the CDC received reports of six cases of serious neurologic (4) and systemic (2) adverse events associated with yellow fever vaccination. These events are rare. Clinicians are encouraged to report to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System patients with fever (>24 hours) or systemic illness within 30 days following vaccination. Despite these rare case reports, yellow fever is an important vaccine-preventable disease among travelers to, and those living in, the tropics of Africa and South America. Because of potential for high risk exposure to and severity of yellow fever infection, and the availability of an efficacious vaccine, ACIP and CDC continue to recommend yellow fever vaccination for persons aged >9 months traveling to countries where yellow fever is endemic or epidemic. [View Article](#) [View MMWR Report](#) [View Recommendations for Yellow Fever Vaccine](#)

### Air pollution linked to higher medical costs

13 November - Reuters Health reported cities that have higher amounts of a particular type of air pollution also spend more on medical treatment of the elderly, according to a study using Medicare data. In the study of 183 cities, Fuchs and Frank looked at the relationship between levels of particulate matter in the air and the use of services by Medicare patients between the ages of 65 and 84 from 1989 to 1991. The researchers found that higher levels of particulate matter were associated with an increase in use of medical services--particularly for outpatient care services such as asthmatics seeking treatment at an emergency room. This was true even

after taking into account other factors that can influence the use of medical services, such as population size, education level, income, cigarette smoking, obesity and the ethnicity of the population. SOURCE: Health Affairs 2002;21:207-214. [View Article](#)

## Cancer-linked virus common in US men, women-CDC

12 November - Reuters Health reported nearly one in five US women between the ages of 12 and 59 are believed to be infected with the sexually transmitted human papillomavirus HPV-16, a virus that increases cervical cancer risk, new study findings show. There are about 100 different types of HPV, which has been linked to genital warts and the development of cervical cancer. While some HPV types cause genital warts and others produce no symptoms, only a handful increase the risk of cervical cancer. HPV-16 is thought to account for as many as half of all cases of cervical cancer nationwide. [View Article](#)

## DoD Releases 5 New Project 112/SHAD Fact Sheets

31 October - DeploymentLINK reported on October 31st, the Department of Defense released five more detailed [fact sheets](#) on Cold War-era chemical and biological warfare tests identified as Deseret Test Center Project 112. Project 112 was a comprehensive program initiated in 1962 out of concern for our nation's ability to protect and defend against these potential threats. These fact sheets are in addition to the 40 fact sheets previously released since September 2001. Details from these fact sheets, as well as those previously released, has been compiled into a [chart](#) on this web site to make it easier for veterans to find information that may apply to their military service. [View Article](#)

## Flaxseed Helps Shield Mice from Prostate Cancer

11 November – Reuters reported mice fed plenty of flaxseed seem to be protected against the worst forms of prostate cancer, which suggests flaxseed contains some protective components, US researchers said on Monday. A team at Duke University Medical Center fed large amounts of flaxseed to mice genetically engineered to develop prostate cancer and compared them to genetically engineered mice that were not fed any flaxseed. About 3% of the mice given flaxseed did not develop prostate cancer at all and the rest had small tumors that were less likely to spread, they reported in the Journal Urology. "We are cautiously optimistic about these findings," urologist Wendy Demark-Wahnefried, who helped lead the study. About 30,000 American men die every year of prostate cancer, the second biggest cancer killer of men after lung cancer. [View Article](#)

## MMR-Autism Linked Rebutted Again

7 November - Danish scientists say they've found no link between the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism, despite looking at more than half a million children to find one. The prospect that the MMR vaccination triggers autism first surfaced in 1998, when British researchers reported on a dozen children who developed the condition and other behavior problems shortly after getting immunized. However, studies since then have failed to support the connection. Dr. Kreesten Madsen, the epidemiologist who led the latest research, says he hopes the new findings will finally quash concerns about the alleged connection. "The risk was the same for vaccinated and unvaccinated children," says Madsen, of the Danish Epidemiology Science Center in Aarhus. "Few studies can be said to be conclusive, but this one was state-of-

the-art." For more on MMR and autism, visit the [Institute of Medicine](#) or the U.S. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). [View Article](#)

## Most Public Health Agencies Making Progress on Preparedness, Survey Finds

12 November - [CIDRAP](#) reported nearly all local public health departments have made some progress on bioterrorism preparedness in the past year, according to a recent online survey by the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO). The most common preparedness steps included the development of relationships with other first responders, training and simulation exercises, and improvements in communication technology, the organization reported in an "issue brief." NACCHO provided an online questionnaire and used e-mail messages to invite a sample of local public health directors to respond. The report concludes, "The common theme is that LPHAs are highly aware of the importance of bioterrorism preparedness and are moving forward to achieve it, although each is beginning at a different point and working with a different set of resources and challenges." [View Article](#)

## New Fabric Protects Against Radiation

14 November – Reuters Health reported scientists have created what is claimed to be the world's first radiation-proof fabric that provides as much protection as a lead vest but at a fraction of the weight. Instead of heavy metals to block radiation and X-rays, the new fabric called Demron is non-toxic, lead-free and fused between two layers of woven fabric. "Demron's potential applications range from lightweight full-body suits -- that would allow the wearer to move unencumbered in high-radiation areas -- to protective tents and radiation-proof linings for aircraft and spacecraft," New Scientist magazine said Wednesday. Unlike traditional protective clothing that only protects against alpha radiation, the new fabric developed by the Florida-based company Radiation Shield Technologies also blocks beta and gamma rays. All three are emitted by the decay of radioactive substances and X-rays. [View Article](#)

## Newly Identified Virus Associated with Wheezing in Infants

1 November – Reuters reports on a study where a recently discovered respiratory virus appears to be an important cause of acute wheezing in young children, according to a report published in the November 2nd issue of *The Lancet*. The virus, known as metapneumovirus, is a member of the Paramyxoviridae family. Although the virus was just discovered in 2001, there is evidence that it has existed for at least 20 years and may have crossed over from birds to humans. Previous reports have shown that the virus can cause respiratory disease similar to that seen with respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) infection. The study can be found in *Lancet* 2002;360:1393-1394. [View Article](#)

## Overall Syphilis Rate Rises for First Time Since 1990

1 November – The [CDC](#) reported despite continued declines among African Americans and women of all races, overall rates of primary and secondary syphilis have increased slightly for the first time in more than a decade, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report, published in the November 1 issue of CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, found that cases of primary and secondary syphilis in the United States rose by 2 percent between 2000 and 2001 (5,979 cases in 2000 to 6,103

cases in 2001). The overall syphilis rate in the United States increased from 2.1 per 100,000 people to 2.2 per 100,000 people, the first such increase since 1990. The report, by CDC epidemiologist Dr. James Heffelfinger, attributed the slight increase to syphilis diagnoses among men. Syphilis rates among U.S. men rose by 15.4 percent between 2000 and 2001. These increases contrast with significant and sustained progress in syphilis elimination in populations and areas where syphilis rates are highest—among African Americans and individuals living in the South. These data show that a careful, concerted effort to eliminate this disease can work. [View article](#) [View MMWR Report](#)

## Parents Lack Information on Proper Car Seat Use

5 November - Reuters Health reported many parents, particularly those who do not speak English, remain unaware of potentially lifesaving practices involving child car seats and airbags, new study findings show. The survey of 655 parents with children age 6 or younger who had used an emergency department in Southern California revealed that only 46% knew that a child weighing 40 to 60 pounds belonged in a booster seat. While 97% of parents of children 3 and younger reported owning a child safety seat, just 42% of parents of children aged 4 to 6 said they owned a safety or booster seat. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) recommends rear-facing car seats for infants, front-facing car seats for toddlers, and booster seats with shoulder harnesses for youngsters. Children under age 12 should not be seated in the front seat, according to the NHTSA, and airbags should be disabled if children need to ride in the front passenger seat. SOURCE: Pediatrics 2002; 110:e61. [View Article](#)

## Preventing Alzheimer's Disease

4 November – Discovery Health reported on a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association finds that older adults who regularly participate in cognitively stimulating activities appear to have a lower risk of developing Alzheimer's disease. The results revealed that for every 1-point increase in cognitive activity score, the risk of Alzheimer's was reduced by 33%. [View Article](#)

## Simple Measures Could Increase Life Expectancy by 5-10 Years

2 October – The British Medical Journal reported simple, cost effective public health measures could lengthen the average human life span by five to 10 years, according to the latest *World Health Report*, the World Health Organization's annual review of global health. The 2002 report quantifies the leading threats to health by geographical region and recommends measures to cut preventable risks. Overall the top 10 risk factors accounting for about 40% of the 56 million deaths in the world each year are underweight in children and mothers; unsafe sex; poor water, sanitation, and hygiene; indoor smoke from solid fuels; iron deficiency; high blood pressure; tobacco; alcohol; high cholesterol; and obesity. While the effects of poor nutrition are mostly limited to the developing world, risk factors such as high blood pressure and obesity are increasingly a global problem. The report predicts that, unless action is taken, by the year 2020 tobacco use will cause nine million deaths a year, compared with about five million now, and overweight and obesity five million deaths, compared with three million now. Over the same period the number of healthy life years lost by underweight children will decline only slightly, from 130 million life years to 110 million. [View Article](#) [View World Health Report](#)

## Telerobotics Aids Cleanup Activities

11 November – DOE Pulse reports researchers at DOE's Oak Ridge National Laboratory are developing robotics technology that can aid in the cleanup of hazardous waste sites while helping to protect humans from serious injury in the process. The telerobotic manipulation system performs cleanup chores at a distance that would have to otherwise be done on site by humans. The current focus of the project is plasma arc cutting of metal structures to dismantle contaminated equipment. Testing of the equipment comes during a time when there is an increasing need for remote systems and robotics for cleanup of DOE facilities. [View Article](#)

## Yogurt Bacteria Supplements Often Duds, Dangerous

12 November – Reuters reported an analysis of 20 Lactobacillus supplements sold in Seattle stores reveals that only a fraction actually contained the live organism, which is a beneficial bacteria commonly found in yogurt. "We found that they were often not at all what they said they were, or that they were contaminated with organisms that could act as pathogens in susceptible people," Dr. Sheryl Berman of Bastyr University in Kenmore, Washington told Reuters Health. Specifically, Berman and co-author Diane Spicer found that 16 of the 20 samples of the supplements contained ingredients that were not listed on the label, and 6 samples included an organism that could cause people to fall ill. For instance, the researchers found bacteria that can cause gastrointestinal illness and, importantly, are often found to be resistant to antibiotics. [View Article](#)

## Zinc Treatment for Diarrhea Reduces Child Deaths

09 November – The British Medical Journal reported giving zinc as a treatment can reduce morbidity and mortality from diarrhea in children. A trial by Baqui and colleagues in rural Bangladesh found that zinc treatment significantly reduced the incidence of diarrhea and acute lower respiratory infection, admissions to hospital due of diarrhea, and other non-injury related causes of death in children. The impact on mortality was large. Zinc treatment is a simple and inexpensive intervention that can be used within existing diarrheal disease control efforts. [View Article](#)

# USEUCOM

## Dysentery Spreads to Thousands in Southern Russia

9 November – Reuters reported more than 1,100 people, most of them children, have been admitted to hospitals across southern Russia in an outbreak of dysentery caused by tainted dairy products from a local factory, according to Russian media. Deputy Health Minister Gennady Onishchenko, visiting Kropotkin, a town 150 miles from the Black Sea in the area most affected by the outbreak, accused the plant's director of hygiene failures. A plunge in living standards and poor hygiene since the collapse of the Soviet Union are the main causes of mass contamination and a resurgence of illnesses long eradicated in the West. News agencies reported about 100 people were discharged on Friday and 110 were to go home on Saturday. [View Article](#)

## Mozambique - Foot-And-Mouth Disease Suspected

8 November – AllAfrica.com reported the Mozambican authorities were alerted to the possibility of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the locality of Calanga, in Maputo province, reports Friday's issue of the daily paper "Noticias". The suspicion arose from reports from local farmers, who reported that some of their cattle are showing sores on their feet and mouths, but confirmation is pending on the results of analysis, to be undertaken by a laboratory in Pretoria. The National Livestock Directorate (DINAP) says in a statement that it has already taken a number of measures to prevent the spread of the disease, which include restrictions on the movement of animals from the affected area. A source from the Veterinary Epidemiology Services said that the outbreak of the disease in Manhica, if confirmed, may be due to illegal entry of animals imported from neighbouring Zimbabwe, where the disease was diagnosed in July last year. [View Article](#)

## Nigeria - Cholera Claims 20 Lives in Taraba

7 November – AllAfrica.com reported an outbreak of cholera epidemic in Lau Local Government Area of Taraba State has claimed the lives of over 20 people and left several others in jeopardy. Daily Trust gathered that the outbreak, which took place in Mayo Loppe village of Lau area that borders Adamawa State, followed the drinking of contaminated water in the area by the villagers who have no access to pipe-borne water. The Taraba State Commissioner for Health, Dr. Phillip Duwe, told journalists in Jalingo that the state government had already sent a medical team and drugs to the area to tackle the problem. [View Article](#)

## Nigeria Records 142 Fresh Polio Cases

11 November – AllAfrica.com reported Nigeria has recorded 142 fresh cases of wild poliovirus transmission, dashing its hope of being certified polio-free at the end of this year, the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports. Although global polio eradication has been fixed for 2005, a country could only be certified polio-free by the World Health Organization (WHO) if it reports zero transmission of wild polio virus for three consecutive years. The new cases are reported in 14 states in the northern parts of the country, including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Socio-cultural beliefs, low level of motivation of health workers, logistics and vaccine distribution mechanism are still factors militating against eradication program. [View Article](#)

## Over 50,000 Cases of Malaria Recorded - Angola

12 November – AllAfrica.com reported at least 56,726 cases of malaria, which resulted in 1,158 deaths, were recorded during the first half of this year alone, in Angola's central coastal Benguela province, the local health services announced. Six fixed units and five mobile ones were set up throughout the province for treatment with insecticides and distribution of mosquito nets, having so far distributed 25,000 to the population. [View Article](#)

## Poland Finds Fourth Mad Cow Disease Case

1 November – ProMED reported a fourth case of mad cow disease has been discovered in Poland, the country's chief veterinarian said on Thursday. The cow had clinical symptoms of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), or mad cow disease, Piotr Kolodziej was quoted as saying by the PAP news agency. The eight-year-old cow originated from a farm in the south-eastern town of Krasnystaw but was transferred a year ago to the nearby region of Zamosc. Kolodziej said all cows from the two farms have been slaughtered. [View Article](#)

## Rwanda: City-wide Meningitis Vaccination Campaign Under Way

31 October – IRIN reported a city-wide vaccination campaign against meningitis was launched in the capital, Kigali, on Thursday. The World Health Organization reported that as of 2 September, 636 meningitis cases and 83 deaths had been reported in eight of 12 provinces in the country. It said at the time that it, the Ministry of Health, Medecins Sans Frontieres and the United Nations Children's Fund had launched a consolidated appeal for two million doses of vaccine for populations at risk. [View Article](#)

## Students, Villagers Exposed to Animal Anthrax – South Africa

12 November – AllAfrica.com reported a University of North West veterinary student was in stable condition at the Mafikeng Provincial Hospital after being exposed to anthrax from dead cows last weekend, the South Africa's North West Province's Health Department reported. The student was exposed to the disease in Miga, near Ramatlabama in Mafikeng. In a statement, department spokeswoman Tidimalo Manyapelolo said 11 other people from the same village consulted at the local clinic for mild diarrhea after eating meat from dead cows. "Health MEC Dr Molefi Sefularo has urged all communities of the province to refrain from eating meat of dead animals as it poses danger to their lives. Members of the community are also urged to visit local clinics in their areas if they suffer from any symptoms of anthrax so they can be treated," Manyapelolo said. [View Article](#)

## Uganda - Cholera Hits Hoima, Kasese

11 November – AllAfrica.com reported health officials in Hoima confirmed on Friday that at least five people had died within a week of a fresh cholera outbreak in Bugambe. Dr. Mathew Emel, the District Director of Health Services, said the source of the infection was a fishing village in Buseruka on the shores of Lake Albert. He said isolated cases of cholera had always occurred on the shores of Lake Albert, and it could be spreading out because of El Nino rains. Emel said the new outbreak in Bugambe affected so many people within a short time because of the Islamic practice of washing dead bodies before burial. Officials suspect the highly anticipated El Nino rains have led to deterioration of hygiene in homes and public places. It is feared such cases could happen anywhere because of the severe rains. The last time Uganda experienced El Nino was in 1997. It sparked off cholera that spread to over 40 districts, affected over 50,000 people, and killed more than 2,000. [View Article](#)

# USCENTCOM

## Disease Rages in War-torn Sudan

8 November –The [BBC](#) reported thousands of people are dying in southern Sudan from the worst outbreak of the deadly leishmaniasis in many years, reports the aid agency, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF). Leishmaniasis, a parasitic disease transmitted by the sand fly, is almost always fatal if left untreated. Many residents of southern Sudan are weakened by 19 years of war, while medical facilities are few and far between, making diseases even more dangerous than usual. Visceral leishmaniasis, also called Kala Azar, is endemic in parts of Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, but some MSF staff say that this year's outbreak is the worst they have ever seen.

"Insecurity, malnutrition and poor access to health care lower the people's natural resistance to diseases and make for an environment where outbreaks like the current one occur." [View Article](#)

## Kenya: Government Warns of Outbreaks of Malaria, Typhoid

9 November – AllAfrica.com reported the Government warned of outbreaks of malaria, typhoid, cholera and dysentery as a result of the onset of El Nino weather conditions. The alert issued by the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Prof Julius Meme, said the mainly water-borne diseases would affect most parts of the country. He said the Government was equipped and ready to battle the outbreak of the diseases. The PS, however, cautioned the public that their input in containing the epidemics was crucial, as the ministry alone could not be relied on to handle the situation. The ministry also announced a massive yellow fever vaccination exercise to be carried out in the Rift Valley from November 9 to November 30. The government has bought enough pesticides for spraying against mosquitoes in schools and the Health Education Department instructed to produce more education materials to be distributed to communities. [View Article](#)

## Malaria in Afghanistan

07 November – CDR Weekly reported an outbreak of malaria has been confirmed in the sub-district of Kharkane, in the Western Afghan province of Badghis (1). According to preliminary results, 90% of the cases are Plasmodium falciparum, although throughout the country, usually between 80 and 90% of malaria cases are Plasmodium vivax (2). It is not known how many cases are included in this particular outbreak. [View Article](#)

## Meningitis Outbreak Looms in Africa, Says WHO

11 November – AllAfrica.com reported The World Health Organization (WHO) is in dire need of \$799 million for a vaccine to combat a meningitis outbreak, which threatens to hit Africa. WHO in conjunction with the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC) and the United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) have appealed for the funds needed to rebuild a stockpile of the vaccine and drugs. Iain Simpson, the Communications Officer-Communicable Diseases, said that without this revolving stock, countries hit by the outbreak, which could strike in two months, would be left to deal with it alone. An outbreak occurs almost every year in the African Meningitis belt that stretches from Ethiopia, Eastern Africa countries to Senegal in the west. This year, Simpson said, a new phenomenon, W135, has appeared making the task of dealing with the outbreak most difficult. W135, which was previously responsible for sporadic cases in Africa was identified as the main cause of Meningitis in Burkina Faso between February and June this year of 1500 deaths. The strategy to combat meningitis primarily lies on vaccination. [View Article](#)

## US Military Airlifts WHO Team to Treat Mystery Afghan Epidemic

29 October – The World Health Organization (WHO) reported US Special Forces have been drafted in to airlift a medical team to a remote corner of Afghanistan where a mystery illness has reportedly killed at least 70 children. A Chinook helicopter was used to take the WHO team along with members of the Agha Khan Development foundation and medical supplies to the Darwaz district of northwestern Badakhshan province, said Lieutenant Colonel Roger King. According to local government officials, scores of children have died from symptoms resembling

whooping cough or diphtheria. Both can be treated with antibiotics and are preventable by vaccination, but only 40 percent of children in Afghanistan have been immunized. [View Article](#)

## USNORTHCOM

### CDC Funds Nine State Coalitions to Address Domestic Violence Prevention

6 November – The [CDC](#) reported the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently awarded more than \$2.6 million to nine state domestic violence coalitions to help develop and coordinate activities to prevent domestic violence in communities across the country. Funding for the Domestic Violence Prevention Enhancement Leadership Through Alliances (DELTA) projects has been awarded to Delaware, Florida, Michigan, Montana, New York State, North Carolina, Ohio, Virginia, and Wisconsin. "Violence against women is a major public health problem with devastating health implications. These grants are part of an ongoing effort by this Department to develop effective domestic violence prevention programs in communities across the country," Secretary Tommy G. Thompson said. "It will not be simple or easy to stop domestic violence and help its victims. But we can and must do it. In doing so, we can prevent pain, anguish and health problems in generations to come." [View Article](#) For additional information from CDC's Injury Center visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury>. To visit the President's Proclamation issues for National Domestic Violence Awareness Month <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/10/20021001-8.html>.

### CDC Web Site Now Provides Information on Community Water Fluoridation

31 October – The [CDC](#) reported people seeking information on whether their water system is fluoridated can now find out by visiting a new Web site at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): [http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/data\\_systems/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth/data_systems/index.htm).

### Changes Needed to Protect Nation's Health

12 November – Reuters reported a panel of experts stated changes to the public health infrastructure, more communication between the government and the public during crises like the anthrax epidemic of last year, and better access to healthcare are urgently needed to improve Americans' health in the 21st century. "The health of the people in the US is not what it could be," Dr. Jo Ivey Boufford of New York University in New York said during a press conference at the 130th Annual Meeting of the American Public Health Association. The US spends more on healthcare than any other country in the world, Boufford said, yet the nation holds 37th place in the World Health Organization's global ranking of health systems. [View Article](#)

### FDA Alerts Public Regarding Recall of Powdered Infant Formula

1 November - The [FDA](#) alerted the public to the voluntary recall of powdered infant formula announced by Wyeth Nutritionals Inc. Certain lots of powdered infant formula manufactured between July 12 and September 25, 2002, may be contaminated with *Enterobacter sakazakii*.

*E. sakazakii* is a foodborne pathogen that can in rare cases cause sepsis (bacteria in the blood), meningitis (inflammation of the lining of the brain), or necrotizing enterocolitis (severe intestinal infection) in newborn infants, particularly premature infants or other infants with weakened immune systems. No illnesses have been reported to date in connection with this contamination. [View Article](#)

## FDA Approves Easy-To-Use HIV Test

7 November – [ABC](#) News reported the government approved a 20-minute HIV test that AIDS experts say is so easy to use it will greatly cut the number of people who unknowingly carry and spread the disease. It's not the first rapid HIV test. A competing version has been sold since the mid-1990s, but it is so difficult to use that hardly any clinics offer it. Today's routine HIV tests take up to two weeks to provide results and at least 8,000 people a year who test positive at public clinics never return to get the news. The new OraQuick test should slash that number and encourage even more of the almost quarter-million Americans who don't know they're infected to seek testing, federal scientists said Thursday in announcing Food and Drug Administration approval of OraQuick. OraQuick may help when the government begins offering smallpox vaccine to health workers and others as protection against a possible bioterrorist attack. While such vaccine plans aren't final yet, smallpox inoculations pose life-threatening risks to anyone with the AIDS virus so a rapid test could prove critical in screening out potential vaccine recipients who didn't know they had HIV. Studies show OraQuick is 99.6 percent accurate, the FDA said. People who test positive should get an old-fashioned lab test to confirm HIV infection. [View Article](#)

## FDA Approves Nicotine Lozenge

1 November – [CNN](#) reported the FDA approved GlaxoSmithKline's Commit lozenge for over-the-counter sales Thursday. It marks the first nicotine-containing lozenge to win the agency's approval. The lozenges, available without a prescription, will be available next month, in 72-lozenge packs for \$39.95. [View Article](#)

## Government Seeks Public Input on Smallpox Study

1 November – [CNN](#) reported the government is seeking public input before it decides whether to let a few dozen toddlers and preschoolers be vaccinated against smallpox, a study to test the best children's vaccine dose but one raising thorny questions about safety and ethics. The vaccine is made of a live virus called vaccinia that can cause its own infections until the injection site scabs over, so researchers plan to keep inoculated children out of day care or school for a month. It's highly unusual for the FDA to seek public opinion on research. "It is a very challenging issue because there is no smallpox circulating right now," said Dr. Karen Midthun, the FDA's head of vaccine research. "There is great concern that there be a lot of safeguards for studies being conducted in children." It's a difficult decision because of the vaccine's risks. Based on studies from the 1960s, 15 of every 1 million people vaccinated will suffer life-threatening reactions, and one or two of them will die. [View Article](#)

## Mental Health System 'Dysfunctional': Panel

1 November - Reuters reports America's system for treating and rehabilitating people with mental illness is in financial and bureaucratic disarray and is plagued by complexities that make

it nearly impossible for many patients to receive needed care, according to a report issued Friday by a presidential mental health commission. The commission's chairman, who called the report an "indictment" of the nation's mental health care system, said that a massive shift in priorities was needed to improve care for mentally ill adults and children. The report paints a picture of a system plagued by fragmented services and inadequate funding, often losing patients in a maze of complexity. The report is an interim step for the New Freedom Initiative, a comprehensive review of the nation's mental health system ordered by President Bush last April. It was written by a panel of policy experts from the government and the private sector, who are later expected to recommend ways to repair the system. [View Article](#)

## NYC Reassures Public On Plague

8 November – [CBS](#) News reported disease investigators tried to track down the source of bubonic plague bacteria that apparently caused a New Mexico couple to become sick while visiting New York City. Health officials believe the couple became infected near their home in Santa Fe, N.M., before they arrived in New York on Nov. 1, said Llewelyn Grant, a spokesman for the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. They were given antibiotics, which usually can treat the disease effectively. The plague cases would be the first in the United States this year and the first in New York City in at least a century. About 10 to 20 people usually get plague each year in the United States, mostly in the West. One in seven cases is fatal. Health officials repeated their assertion that the public is not in danger because bubonic plague cannot be passed person-to-person. In extremely rare cases, bubonic plague can transform into pneumonic plague, a contagious form. But health officials have said that is unlikely to happen in these cases - and also stressed that the patients were isolated just in case. In Santa Fe, health workers are testing animals for plague bacteria to learn the source of the infection. Some wild animals, including rodents and prairie dogs, pass the infection to fleas, which can infect humans. Fleas on the couple's New Mexico property had tested positive. Investigators also were conducting tests in New York as a precaution, Grant said. [View Article](#)  
[View CDC Plague Information](#)

## Only 9% of US Toddlers Get Immunized on Time

5 November - Reuters Health reported only 9% of children in the US get all the vaccines they need at the right time by the time they turn 2 years of age, according to researchers from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). After reviewing national data on immunization rates, Elizabeth T. Luman and her colleagues discovered that the vast majority of 2-year-olds did not receive at least one vaccine at the age recommended by health officials. "Vaccinations received too early may result in less than optimal protection," Luman told Reuters Health. "When vaccinations are given late, children remain unprotected for a period of time. This can result in disease for the individual child, as well as the increased possibility of disease outbreaks in the country." SOURCE: Pediatrics 2002;110:935-939. [View Article](#) Information on individual vaccines as well as the recommended childhood immunization schedule can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/Parents-Guide/textreaderversion.htm>

## USDA May Include Irradiated Ground Beef in School Lunch Program Soon

1 November - CIDRAP News reported the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) may begin offering irradiated ground beef to school districts for use in USDA-subsidized school lunch programs soon, according to Jerry Redding, a USDA spokesman in Washington. But if that happens, the product will go only to school districts that want it, Redding told CIDRAP News.

Currently, "By specification, USDA does not purchase irradiated beef for federal feeding programs," Redding said. But the 2002 farm bill, passed last May, included a provision that, in buying food for federal programs, USDA cannot exclude the use of any federally approved food safety technology. The provision, authored by Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, was intended to permit the purchase of irradiated foods. [View Article](#)

## USPACOM

### New Zealand Concern About Typhoid in Samoa

30 October – ProMED reported New Zealand health officials say they are concerned about an outbreak of typhoid in Samoa. Two hundred Samoans have contracted the disease so far this year. Most of the cases were recorded between May and June 2002, but the New Zealand health ministry says it's only just been informed of the outbreak. Hundreds of Samoans living in New Zealand usually fly home for Christmas, and officials are urging them to get immunized or take extra precautions such as boiling their drinking water. [View Article](#)

### Public Efforts Begin to Halt Taiwan Dengue Outbreak

11 November - Reuters reported starting this week, every worker in Taiwan's second-largest city must spend a half-hour before and after work every Tuesday to help wipe out breeding sites for the mosquitoes that spread dengue fever. This year's dengue outbreak is the most serious in Taiwan in 14 years. As of last Monday, 4,270 confirmed cases of the disease have been reported and it is still spreading. Kaohsiung City, with a population of 1.5 million, accounts for half of all cases of dengue fever in Taiwan. Its adjacent jurisdictions, Kaohsiung County and Pingtung County, where 1,794 cases and 192 cases have been reported respectively as of Monday, were also asked by central government to organize a day of popular action against dengue weekly. [View Article](#)

## USSOUTHCOM

### Nothing Significant to Report

Please contact the below-listed POC for suggested improvements and/or comments regarding this report. This report is also available on the USACHPPM website at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/Hiupdate/>.

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## ACRONYMS

ABC – American Broadcasting Company

AFMIC - Armed Forces Medical Intelligence Center

BBC – British Broadcasting Company

BMJ – British Medical Journal

BSE – Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

CBS – Columbia Broadcasting System

CIDRAP – Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy

CDC – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CNN – Cable News Network

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

FDA – Food and Drug Administration

IRIN - Integrated Regional Information Networks, part of the [UN](#) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

MMWR – Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report

NASA – National Aeronautic and Space Association

NIH – National Institute of Health

WHO – World Health Organization